

**CONTACT:**

Robert Daguillard (**MEDIA ONLY**)

[daguillard.robert@epa.gov](mailto:daguillard.robert@epa.gov)

202-564-6618

Maureen Pepper (**PUBLIC INQUIRIES**)

[tooke.maureen@epa.gov](mailto:tooke.maureen@epa.gov)

208-378-5626

Lina Younes (**EN ESPAÑOL**)

[younes.lina@epa.gov](mailto:younes.lina@epa.gov)

202-564-9924

## **EPA Encourages Homeowners to Care for Their Septic Systems During SepticSmart Week**

**WASHINGTON** — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will hold its second annual SepticSmart Week September 22-26. SepticSmart Week outreach activities encourage homeowners and communities to care for and maintain their septic systems. Nearly one-quarter of all American households depend on septic systems to treat their wastewater.

Failure to maintain septic system can lead to back-ups and overflows that pollute local waterways, create dead zones, raise water treatment costs and endanger human health. Pollutants such as nitrogen, phosphorus and fecal bacteria can enter ground and surface waters from septic systems. Such pollutants affect drinking water, lakes, rivers and estuaries. The algal blooms they may generate can produce toxins harmful to human, animals and marine life.

Data collected by states attribute septic systems and other onsite wastewater treatment methods to water quality impairments in 22,909 miles of rivers and streams; 199,995 acres of lakes, reservoirs and ponds; and 72,320 acres of wetlands. By properly maintaining their septic systems, homeowners can help reduce these numbers.

“When homeowners protect their septic systems, it’s good for their health, their neighbors’ health, and their pocketbooks,” said Ken Kopocis, Deputy Assistant Administrator in EPA’s Office of Water. “Not only is EPA directly educating homeowners on septic maintenance, but we are also coordinating with states and municipalities to do the same.”

During SepticSmart Week, EPA will provide homeowners with tips for septic maintenance, including:

- **Protect It and Inspect It**
- **Think at the Sink**
- **Don't Overload the Commode**
- **Don't Strain Your Drain**
- **Shield Your Field**

EPA's SepticSmart program educates homeowners about proper septic system care and maintenance all year long. In addition, it serves as an online resource for industry practitioners, local governments and community organizations, providing access to tools to educate clients and residents.

For more information, visit: [www.epa.gov/septicsmart](http://www.epa.gov/septicsmart)